



# Happiness@ TheSpeedofLife

## Happiness@TheSpeedofLife Newsletter Edition 72: Help Me! I Feel Overwhelmed!

**1,641** words of content including seven ideas to simplify and de-stress your holidays and your workplace. Approximate reading time required: **6.56** minutes. And isn't your Happiness worth it?

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Welcome to my e-newsletter, which focuses on defining and applying the Principles of Happiness and Positive Emotion in your life and work.

If you received this from a friend, [SUBSCRIBE](#) Now to get your own copy in the future.

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### I. HELP ME! I FEEL OVERWHELMED!

**Hello, my name is Jim, and I am an email-aholic.** Yes, I confess my addiction, as well as the sense of overwhelm I feel when I open my Inbox.

**A few weeks ago I experienced what, at the time, felt like a significant breakdown.** I received a message from a colleague that my email account was bouncing back as “non-existent.” Two minutes of research revealed that my OLD URL and email address had expired while I was not paying attention.

**For five minutes I panicked.** Then I took a deep breath and thought, “I changed my name five years ago. Isn’t it about time to let that old account go?” I had continued to use the old email for a lot of newsletter signups over the years. With the account closed, I noticed my daily email volume dropped by nearly one-third. Rather than focus on the “loss” I instead decided to look at this as The Universe’s way of forcing me to reduce distractions.

**With my email reduced, I’m noticing that I feel less overwhelmed** when I press Send/Receive in my Outlook. My self-talk has also slowed down. Interesting. The experience has alerted me that maybe it’s time to do some Intentional Simplifying.

### We Create Our Own Stress

**Do you ever find yourself thinking: “I have too much to do -- I feel overwhelmed!?”** How we are is a result of choices we make and the way we surround ourselves with stuff and challenges. Sometimes our choices can leave us busy and full -- yet unhappy. That’s when we need to start dropping what does not serve us.

Happiness Principle #12 says:



**SIMPLIFY. Automate, delegate, or eliminate tasks or goals that complicate your life. Being content with simpler pleasures increases your opportunity for awe.**

**Woven through many of the Principles of Happiness is a common thread I call “eliminate friction.”** Friction – as you learned in fifth-grade science class -- is resistance to motion. Friction slows things down by removing energy. A rocket flying through the vacuum of space will move freely, but if it strays near a planet it gets caught in gravitational pull or the resisting force of atmosphere. The larger the rocket, the more friction it encounters. Eventually, friction will cause it to burn away until all motion ceases.

**While the example is physical, it describes what friction does to you and your happiness.** Think about the things that complicate your life – tasks, goals, relationships, commitments, and expectations (and email!). How many of those feel like appendages on the rocket, splaying out in all directions to catch the atmospheric resistance and slow you down?

**To Simplify is not necessarily about giving up goals or possessions or busy schedules, but rather a reminder to keep what we have and what we do in perspective.** Simplify is about striving to remove the clutter in our lives in order to concentrate our energies toward those things that really matter.

**On another level, Simplify is a suggestion to avoid over-commitment as a lifestyle.** When we surround ourselves with all the best and the newest, or try too hard to keep everyone else happy, we actually narrow our options for experiencing our own happiness. When we live a simple life, we increase our opportunity for awe.

*"Life is really simple, but we insist on making it complicated." --Confucius*

### **Start Planning Now for a Less-Stress Year**

**As you race toward the start of the busy holiday season and year end activities,** don't let the convergence of work, family demands, holiday gatherings, cooking, cleaning, and shopping push you over the edge into the Dark Pit of Stress. Start planning now to leave space to enjoy simple conversation and the best of what this time of year has to offer.

**Here are some steps you might take to Simplify for a less-stress year-end:**

- **Schedule “Nothing” Time.** Establish time in your calendar to do nothing. Learn how to be at ease in solitude, silence, and stillness. Realize you don't need all that “noise” around you to feel content – plus a little downtime will give you space to recharge your batteries.
- **Streamline Your Goals.** We typically get 80% of the impact from 20% of our goals. Line up your personal goals and identify the handful that will provide you the most return on your investment of time. A simplified focus will increase your output and creativity while reducing your stress.
- **Let Something Go.** You may already feel some dread building up in you over your holiday chores. Consider cutting a few things off your list this year through simplifying. Last year I decided to simplify our outside decorations, and instead of spending hours stringing lights I opted for 10 minutes arranging three red and green spotlights to light the house. Imagine my





**Why is this true? Back to physics:** when you eliminate the friction – i.e. resistance, discontinuity, resource and schedule conflicts – between those multiple simultaneous priorities, the energy that used to go into unproductive juggling now goes into DOING.

### An Exercise for the Workplace

**Reach out to an associate (peer or direct report) who appears overwhelmed.** Put yourself in the place of a coach, and ask: “What would you be able to accomplish tomorrow if you only had to worry about ONE THING?” Draw out an answer, then help them structure the next day around that single focus and protect them from distractions.

**This may not be a drill you can do often; yet you will be amazed at the payback from your efforts.** For people who are feeling stuck and overwhelmed, even a single day of feeling productive can help them renew hope and reconnect to their work.

**Remember: Leadership is not about a title.** The most effective leaders are those who can cut through the clutter and crap to focus on what is most important. Anyone can be a leader who can help others Simplify and focus so that more of what matters is what gets done!

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### IV. PERSONAL: ANOTHER FIRST – AND A WIN!

I had the pleasure to witness the Fighting Irish of Notre Dame as they produced their most definitive football win this year, against Utah on 13-November. While it was a fabulous game (with fabulous seats, 10<sup>th</sup> row up in the end zone!), the real highlight was grandbaby Jonathan’s first road trip to the university where his parents met and where they were later married in the Basilica on the campus.



**As you can see, he was dressed for this photo moment at The Grotto, in his baby version of The Shirt!**

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### IV. SHAMELESS COMMERCE DIVISION

- **Give Happiness for the Holidays!** [Happiness At The Speed of Life: 13 Powerful Strategies for Finding Happiness at Home and on the Job](#) includes over 150 practical ideas for building your Positive Emotional muscles. And if you help your friends and family get happier, they’ll love you even more!

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### V. CONTACT

Hi, I’m Jim Smith, PCC, The Executive Happiness Coach®. I work with smart, successful people like you, who secretly struggle with overwhelm, negative self-talk, and fear of more success. I help you become a better leader by “holding up a mirror” to show you where you are now, helping you paint a clear picture of a better future, and then supporting you **as you build powerful new behaviors that transform how you “show up” in your life and work.** You will achieve more



## Happiness@ TheSpeedofLife

clarity, build broader leadership skills, and expand your capacity to LEAD your life on a MUCH bigger stage!

I have helped thousands of leaders and business owners just like you to increase effectiveness at work AND live a happier, more balanced life. I invite you to contact me for a free Leadership Strategy Session to learn how you can create **a less-stress leadership presence**.

Reach me directly: <mailto:Jim@TheExecutiveHappinessCoach.com> or +1-440-885-3247

### All things Happiness Coach:

Blog: [www.LifeWithHappiness.com](http://www.LifeWithHappiness.com). Ask me a question on [LinkedIn](#), [Friend me on Facebook](#), or [Follow me on Twitter](#).

View past editions <http://www.TheExecutiveHappinessCoach.com/newsletter/archives.cfm>

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**Happiness is a decision, not an event.  
How will YOU decide today?**

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